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THOMAS JÜLCH. *Bodhisattva der Apologetik: die Mission des buddhistischen Tang-Mönchs Falin. With an English Foreword by Bart Dessein*, Munich: Utz, 2013, 3 vols., 1142 pp. ISBN 978-3-8316-4237-3.

It is well known that one of the strategies used by the Tang rulers to claim legitimacy of their rule was to trace their ancestry back to Laozi with whom they shared a common surname. In contrast to the Sui who had based their unifying rule on Buddhism, the Tang emperors therefore supported Daoism from the very moment they ascended the throne in 618 AD. Availing himself of this momentum of support and to secure the position of Daoism for the new dynasty, the Daoist scholar Fu Yi 傅奕 (554-639) who had been promoted to the influential position of Grand Astrologer under Gaozu 高祖 (r. 618–626), promptly submitted a memorial in 621 titled “Eleven Articles on reducing Buddhist Monasteries and Pagodas and diminishing Buddhist Monks and Nuns, to Profit the State and Benefit the People.” In 626, two of Fu Yi’s devotees, Li Zhongqing 李仲卿 and Liu Jinxi 劉進喜 handed in similar petitions to the throne.

The Buddhist monk Falin 法琳 (572–640), born two years before the great persecution of Buddhism under the former emperor Wu of the Northern Zhou had experienced the existential threat that Buddhism faced in the late sixth century. Blaming the Daoist Zhang Bin for having instigated the Zhou emperor to suppress Buddhism (*Bianzheng lun* 辯正論, end of *juan* 3) he was well aware of the potential danger of the attack that these Daoist scholars had launched on Buddhism. Therefore, when emperor Gaozu officially asked for feedback on Fu Yi’s allegations, Falin immediately wrote a most detailed refutation titled *Treatise on the Destruction of the Evil* (*Poxie lun* 破邪論) in 622 and an even more comprehensive work titled *Treatise on the Explanation of what is Correct* (*Bianzheng lun*) that he completed around 633.

Falin knew that the two earlier famous responses to the attack by Zhang Bin 張賓—the *Xiadao lun* 笑道論 by Zhen Luan 甄鸞 which ridiculed the Daoist position, and the *Erjiao lun* 二教論 by Shi Daoan 釋道安 which did not even grant Daoism the status of a teaching (*jiao* 教)—had not been able to fend off the imperial persecution back in 574. He therefore decided to write refutations that were not just stating a counter position in the first place but reached out and addressed each single point of the Daoist allegations in a mode of scholarly argumentation. Assuming that references to Buddhist sources would not be convincing as counter evidence to Confucian and Daoist arguments, he further decided to make ample use of Confucian and Daoist sources to support his own refutations. This strategy of refuting hostile denunciations by *systematically* using their own discursive tools and authoritative sources marks a debut of such a trans-religious debate approach in the history of Chinese religions.

Although the Chinese interreligious polemical debate and other apologetic works have been studied in great detail by scholars during the last hundred years, Falin’s work has been neglected in Western literature despite it being probably the most interesting and sophisticated contribution to this debate. This is mainly due to the high level of erudition regarding an extraordinarily broad range of textual traditions with which the author Falin was familiar, and which is therefore also required from any reader and translator who attempts to provide an adequate interpretation of Falin’s difficult and highly complex texts. Few scholars possess the kind of erudition that enables them to fully understand the argumentative line behind the intricate mixture of textual references used by Falin in his texts to defend Buddhism.

Thomas Jülch has accomplished a remarkable job in working himself through the jungle of quotes, hidden allusions and references made to a huge corpus of Daoist, Confucian, Buddhist and historiographical texts which constitute the power of Falin's argumentation. In the present three volume opus—which is a revised and considerable extended version of an earlier publication based on his 2010 dissertation—Jülch has added translations of further texts from the historiographical tradition and restructured his analysis.¹ Like the previous book, this work is split into two parts, an introductory analytical part of 188 pages (vol. 1, pp. 1-188) and a much more substantial part of meticulously annotated translations that comprise 852 pages (vol. 1, pp. 189-374, vol 2, and vol. 3). The third volume includes a bibliography, indexes of persons and titles, and a short subject index.

The analytical part pursues three main questions: First, which arguments are taken over by Falin from earlier apologetic writings (addressed in subsections 9 and 10)? Second, on which sources does Falin base his apologetics (subsections 11 and 12)? Third, based on direct influence and intertextual correspondences with Falin's apologetics, what portion of Buddhist historiographical and apologetic literature has been informed by Falin's apologetics (subsection 13)? This analytical part is divided into 14 subsections: Jülch starts with a short introduction on the concept of apologetics (subsection 1: pp. 1-3), outlines the organisation of this section (subs. 2: p. 4), and provides some helpful political context for the debates by discussing the relationship of the first two Tang emperors to Daoism and Buddhism (3: 5-14). Jülch then turns to Falin's apologetic writings by discussing structure, authorship and audience, composition dates, prefaces, textual organisation and reading aids for the two texts *Poxie lun* and *Bianzheng lun*; he also explains his selection of parts to translate (4: 15-27). Some of the more technical information given in this subsection (esp. 4.5-4.8) directly relates to the translations in the second part of his book, and would have been more conveniently accessible if they had been provided in short technical introductions right before each of the respective translations. Jülch then presents the main historiographical sources, *Fodao lunheng* 續佛道論衡 and *Xu fodao lunheng* 續佛道論衡, in the form of short summaries of their contents (5: 27-31). He also summarizes the biographical and hagiographical sources for Falin, namely *Falin biezhuàn* 法琳別傳, *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳, and *Fodao lunheng* (6: 32-45) adding some critical reflections on hagiography on p. 34. On the basis of these, supported by a wide range of other primary sources as well as of Western and Japanese secondary literature, he then reconstructs a biographical sketch of Falin. This subsection (7: 45-59) should have included a further critical reflection on the historical value of the sources that he used, in particular on the apologetic sources. Next, Jülch turns back to the context and discusses Falin's three major opponents, Fu Yi, Liu Jinxi and Li Zhongqing and their memorials against Buddhism (8: 59-63), subsequently broadening his perspective by looking at the wider tradition of Chinese Buddhist apologetics, including polemical treatises, historiographical works and philosophical texts (9: 63-76). He then explores the core arguments in Falin's apologetics and earlier apologetic writings. This subsection (10: 77-134) which forms the longest part of Jülch's analysis presents three main argumentative themes each comprising a number of core arguments: a) Buddhism harmonizes with Confucian values (11 core arguments); b) Buddhism is superior to Confucianism (6 core arguments); and c) Buddhism is superior to Daoism (23 core arguments). Jülch distinguishes earlier apologetic forms of each of these 40 core arguments used by Falin (if there are any precursors) and then shows how Falin applies these in his own argumentation. This is a most useful summary of Falin's main apologetic arguments and their historical provenance—due to the unprecedented scope of Falin's apologetic writings it covers most of the Buddhist

¹ Thomas, Jülch, *Die apologetischen Schriften des buddhistischen Tang-Mönchs Falin: with an English Summary*, Munich: Utz, 2011.

apologetic arguments employed to this point in time. Therefore this part also serves as a substantial introduction into the contents of the apologetic debates at a specific point in time as the apologetics have been strictly extrapolated from one precisely dated textual corpus. However, a few major questions are not addressed in this part. Jülch does not discuss whether Falin follows any argumentative strategy by the way he presents his arguments. Are these arguments just presented randomly as an accumulation of any argument Falin could get hold of or is there a more sophisticated argumentative logic behind all these arguments? What does Falin add to the existing debate and how does this indicate his own stance? Also missing in this part is a critical reflection of Jülch's own analytical methodology: how did Jülch arrive at his own analytical categories to classify the arguments? Is he using emic or etic categories? What kinds of arguments are exchanged in this debate and how do they relate to more dogmatic and theoretical issues about truth and salvation etc.? In the subsequent subsection (11: 135-151), Jülch looks at the instrumentalization of sources to support the argumentation. He distinguishes a) correct quotes of authentic sources, b) manipulated false quotes of authentic sources, c) quotes of apocryphal sources, and d) reference to legends without sources. Jülch does not explain why these distinctions are more relevant than, for example, the logic of the arguments (usage of metaphors, identifying concepts or numerological schemes etc.). This is followed by a very short reflection on the genre of *chenwei* 讖緯 texts that provides a list of all references to this genre (12: 151-153). Jülch then investigates intertextuality within the spectrum of texts relating to Falin's apologetics. In this subsection (13: 154-176), Jülch provides two column tables for each of the texts introduced in subsections 4.-6. in which the intertextual passages are listed side by side. This is a most helpful reference tool for any future studies that attempt to analyse textual composition and collage techniques in this corpus more systematically. However, it would have been helpful if Jülch would have indicated the approximate length of these passages vis-à-vis the text as a whole or the percentage that these passages occupy in the text. The analytical part concludes with a discussion of the impact of Falin's apologetics in Song times (14: 177-185).

Missing in this first analytical part is any methodological reflections including a literature review. Jülch does not position his own research within the wider academic debate, and he does not explain his own approach or contribution to the quite well established field. What are the conceptual conditions of Falin's apologetics? How does Falin's methodology of using Confucian and Daoist texts to defend Buddhism relate to the by then well established interpenetration of Buddhist and Daoist scripture, the adaption of concepts and practices, appropriation of texts and plagiarism, often by means of falsification, or creation of new apocryphal texts with new historical claims and the production of scriptural doppelgängers all of which has been analysed in great detail in the works of Erik Zürcher,² Kenneth Ch'en,³ Arthur Wright,⁴ Michel Strickmann,⁵ Franciscus Verellen,⁶ Christine Mollier,⁷ Friederike

² *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China*, Leiden: Brill, 1959; and: "Buddhist Influence on Early Taoism," *T'oung Pao* 66 (1980): 84-147.

³ "Buddhist-Taoist Mixtures in the Pa-shih-i-hua t'u," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 9 (1945-47): 1-12; "Anti-Buddhist Propaganda During the Nan-Ch'ao," *HJAS* 15 (1952): 167-192; "On Some Factors Responsible for the Anti-Buddhist Persecution Under the Pei-Ch'ao," *HJAS* 17 (1954): 261-273; *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964; and: *The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973.

⁴ "Fu I and the Rejection of Buddhism," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 12.1 (1951): 33-47; "Buddhism and Chinese Culture: Phases of Interaction," *Journal of Asian Studies* 17 (1957): 17-42; and: "T'ang T'ai-tsung and Buddhism," in: *Perspectives on the T'ang*, ed. Arthur F. Wright and Denis Twitchett, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973, pp. 239-263.

⁵ "India in the Chinese Looking-Glass," in *The Silk Route and the Diamond Path. Esoteric Buddhist and the Art on the Trans-Himalayan Trade Routes*, ed. Deborah. E. Klimburg-Salter, Los Angeles: UCLA Art Council, 1982, pp. 53-63.

Assandri⁸ and others? A critical discussion of existing scholarship in the field would have allowed Jülch to highlight the relevance of his own contribution in much keener terms. In the light of this scholarship he thus might have emphasized that we do not find the common allegations of plagiarism or theft in Falin's work, there are few attempts to compete with rivals, etc. Instead of surreptitiously stealing and rewriting texts of his opponents, Falin deliberately uses intellectual tools that he explicitly defines as belonging to the opponent's side. And it seems that this is exactly the central innovative point of his whole exercise which stymies his opponents' critique most efficiently. He refutes his opponents not by means of a counter attack but by providing a systematic response that is based on a point by point investigation, backed by sources accepted by his opponents, which thus forces them to face his arguments. To thus fight the debate in the discursive field of his opponents reflects a confidence in his own erudition and insights as well as in the truth and superiority of his arguments that is unprecedented in Chinese history. His work is a first systematic attempt at literally translating Buddhist values into Daoist and Confucian language with only infrequent traces of the old practice of appropriating the opponent's texts—seen in cases where Falin manipulates quotes of passages from authentic texts, replacing central Daoist or Confucian terms by Buddhist ones (for examples, see subsection 11.2).

Jülch's analysis only touches on these points and instead focuses mainly on classifications of texts, arguments, usage of sources etc. Yet, there is no critical reflection on these classifications, which are defined in each case by Jülch himself, and are not systematically developed or inferred from the text. Why, for example is the emic category of miracle stories, which provide miraculous proof or supernatural evidence (*lingyan* 靈驗) as evidence for dogmatic truth,⁹ not discussed as a specific kind of argumentation? There is very little analysis of the logic of argumentation, hermeneutics or exegetical strategies. The analytical presentation of Jülch's own arguments is sometimes a little diffuse, and many details that are irrelevant for his main analytical line (such as illustrative narratives and bibliographical references) should have been put in footnotes so as not to disrupt the flow of the main text. Other arguments are presented repeatedly as the structure of Jülch's work proceeds from short summaries to more detailed explorations of the same themes.

Apart from providing a precise introduction into the textual corpus related to Falin's apologetics the analytical part can also be taken as a valuable introduction into more general methodological issues of textual forms and genres, dating, transmission, reception and interpretation, issues that are relevant also for other textual corpora from the Chinese middle ages. The strength of Jülch's work clearly lies in its providing useful and well structured summaries and data and, even more, in the translations of the second part with their rich annotations.

The second part provides a complete translation of the *Poxie lun*; translations of *juan* 1, 2, 5 and 6 of the *Bianzheng lun*; of the *Falin biezhuàn*, Falin's biography in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*; and of *juan* 3 of the *Fodao lunheng*, relating to Falin's debates, biography

⁶ “‘Evidential Miracles in Support of Taoism’: The Inversion of a Buddhist Apologetic Tradition in Late Tang China,” *Toung Pao* 78 4/5 (1992): 217-263.

⁷ *Buddhism and Taoism Face to Face: Scripture, Ritual, and Iconographic Exchange in Medieval China*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008; and: 2010 : “Iconizing the Daoist-Buddhist Relationship: Cliff Sculptures in Sichuan during the Reign of Emperor Tang Xuanzong,” *Daoism: Religion, History and Society* 2 (2010): 95-133.

⁸ “Die Debatten zwischen Daoisten und Buddhisten in der frühen Tang-Zeit und die Chongxuan-Lehre des Daoismus,” PhD Heidelberg 2002. Proquest, UMI, Microfilms, No. 3111333. University of Michigan, 2004; and: *Dispute zwischen Daoisten und Buddhisten im Fodao lunheng des Daoxuan (596–667)*, Gossenberg: Ostasien Verlag, 2015.

⁹ As discussed by Verellen in his article “‘Evidential Miracles in Support of Taoism’: The Inversion of a Buddhist Apologetic Tradition in Late Tang China,” *Toung Pao* 78 4/5 (1992): 217-263.

and work. The translation is overall accurate with minor imprecisions. It is quite technical and very close to the text, its style neither elegant nor fluent. This puts more weight on his choice of individual translation terms, the implications of which are sometimes unclear and make a precise understanding of the text difficult, especially if translations of central conceptual terms deviate from the commonly established translation terms. Thus *shengren* 聖人 is rendered as “Berufener” (instead of “Weiser” or “Heiliger”) and *qi* 氣 is translated as “Wirkkraft” (a term mostly used to translate *de* 德), *ziran* 自然 is translated as “Natur” (vol 2, p. 6), and *li* 理 is once even translated as “Rationalität” (194). Jülch’s German is also not always unerring which (in addition to his usage of old spelling rules) sometimes adds another level of confusion to the reading. A passage like “um so den Erwartungen des Volkes beizuspringen, und eine Periode des großen Schatzes zu verantworten” (200) might illustrate this. Another example is the following passage: “Es verhält sich so, daß die Stellen, an denen er die kaiserliche Dynastie an zahlreichen Stellen betrügt und täuscht, sehr zahlreich sind; und daß er die Berufenen in äußerster und intimster Weise besudelt und beschämt” (220). So even for a native German reader who is familiar with these texts, awkward translations sometimes require another look at the Chinese original, which Jülch has fortunately provided together with the text. Both the Chinese and German texts are arranged in a way that parallelisms are made visible and this is very helpful in understanding the argumentative rhetoric of the text. Including an analysis of the argumentative function of these parallelisms and other literary forms would have served to explain the rhetorical strategies of the texts more precisely.

The greatest strength of the translation part is Jülch’s most detailed annotations, without which the text would not be comprehensible even though a reader would be given a most accurate translation. Jülch’s meticulous work of identifying the many textual references (almost exhaustively) and interpreting them (almost without mistakes) in a way that they make sense in Falin’s argumentation is truly impressive. This immense task required a very high level of understanding of, and penetration into, the textual world and conceptual logic of Falin. Jülch cannot be praised highly enough for having accomplished this amazing and most overwhelming task that has hitherto hindered readers from accessing these very fascinating and rich texts. Jülch’s work has thereby opened up a new most important field that will certainly foster further research on Falin—perhaps even among English speaking academia, as his extensive work makes a lot of previously inaccessible information and data easily accessible even to a readership that does not understand German. A more detailed subject index would have further aided readers in navigating more easily through this voluminous work and in using it as a reference work.

The bibliography is comprehensive and includes numerous important Japanese works. To my surprise, some important Western works are missing: Paul Pelliot’s earliest publication on the *Huahu jing* 化胡經,¹⁰ Arthur Wright’s article on Buddhist interaction with Chinese culture,¹¹ Christine Mollier’s most relevant book on the interaction of Buddhism and Daoism,¹² or Franciscus Verellen’s paper on miracle stories¹³ as well as some of Friederike Assandri’s valuable contributions.¹⁴

¹⁰ “Les Mo-ni et le Houa-hou-king,” *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 3 (1903): 318–327.

¹¹ “Buddhism and Chinese Culture: Phases of Interaction,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 17 (1957): 17–42.

¹² *Buddhism and Taoism: Face to Face*, Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2008.

¹³ “‘Evidential Miracles in Support of Taoism’: The Inversion of a Buddhist Apologetic Tradition in Late Tang China,” *Toung Pao* 78 4/5 (1992): 217–263.

¹⁴ “Understanding Double Mystery: Daoism in Early Tang as Mirrored in the FDLH (T 2104) and *Chongxuanxue*,” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 32.3 (2005): 427–440; *Beyond the Dao de jing: Twofold Mystery Philosophy in Tang Daoism*, Magdalena: Three Pines Press, 2009; “Early Medieval Daoist texts: Strategies of Reading and Fusion of Horizons,” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 37.3 (2010): 381–396; and:

Despite some shortcomings in the analytical part and a translation that reads a bit clumsily, Jülch's work is a masterpiece that deserves great accolades for all the painstaking effort that went into reconstructing Falin's apologetic arguments. His work is a landmark that helps unlocking this difficult and multi-layered text. This book ought to be on the shelves of any reputable library.

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